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FOCOLARE AND ECUMENISM

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CHIARA LUBICH'S MEETINGS WITH CARDINAL HUME AND ARCHBISHOP RUNCIE – INTERVIEW WITH THE BBC

Feature article - page 4

GEN VERDE

An experience of unity

page 17

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Chiara Lubich

OUR YES TO GOD

We would like to inform our readers that the series of articles by Chiara Lubich on the Will of God will continue in the next issue.

4 *FOCOLARE AND ECUMENISM*
GREAT BRITAIN: March 17, 1
Paul VI greets the Anglican Bishop
Levellyn, introduced by Igino Gion
Also present were all those particip
in an ecumenical meeting being he
Rocca di Papa. It was a stepping-sto
the Ecumenical journey of the Foc

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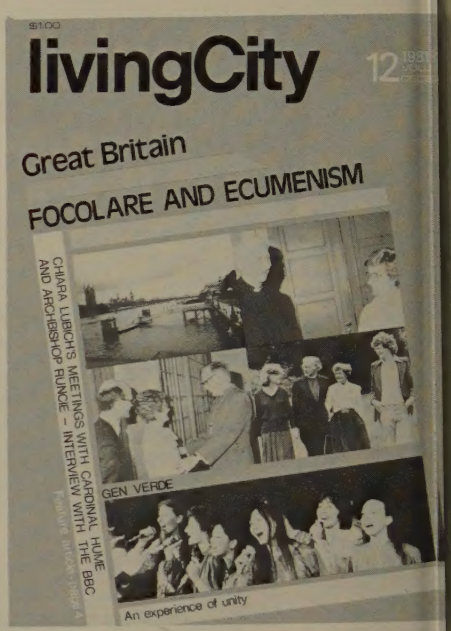

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COVER:
FOCOLARE AND ECUMENISM IN GR
BRITAIN.
TOP LEFT: London viewed from the Thames River.
TOP RIGHT: On June 10 Cardinal H
received Chiara Lubich, who informed
about the recent developments in the li
the Focolare Movement in England.
CENTER LEFT: Dr. Robert Runcie,
Archbishop of Canterbury, welcomes C
Lubich accompanied by Dimitri Bregant.
CENTER RIGHT: Archbishop Runcie his wife Rosalind and his children, Reb
and James. (Photo by John Miles. All o
pictures in feature article by the St. C
Center, Rocca di Papa, Italy.)
BOTTOM: GEN VERDE. 19 young wo
from 12 countries share the experienc
their life through their music.

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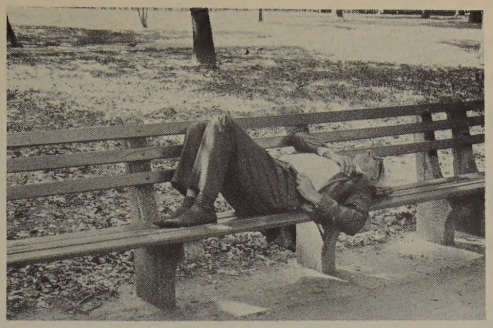
GEN VERDE: is an international musical group of the Focolare Movement composed of 19 young women from 12 countries who share the experience of their life based on the Gospel message of unity and love.



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CHRISTMAS:

JESUS IS LEFT OUT

Christmas is almost here, and the streets of Zurich are sparkling with lights. On the main street, Bahnhofstrasse, and on the surrounding streets, there is an endless row of shops displaying a wealth that is elegant but excessive. We are in a country that is probably the richest in the world. Riding by, on our left I see a number of store windows. Inside it looks as if it were snowing: an optical illusion. There are boys and girls on sleds drawn by deer and other little animals from a Walt Disney-like world – more sleds and Santa Claus; does, little pigs, rabbits, frogs, red puppets and dwarfs. Everything moves around graciously. And there! There are the angels . . . . But no. They are fairies invented for the occasion to decorate the white landscape.

On the sidewalk there is a little boy with his parents. He is standing on tip-toe, fascinated by what he sees.

My heart is filled with a sense of disbelief, and then with a sort of rebellion: this wealthy world has made Christmas and all that goes with it its own and has moved Jesus out.

This world loves the poetry, the atmosphere, the friendships that Christmas brings – the gifts, the lights, the stars, the singing. This world counts on Christmas to bring the greatest profit of the year. But it does not think of Jesus.

"He came unto his own, and his own received him not . . . ."

"There was no room for him at the inn . . . ." Not even at Christmas.

Last night I could not sleep – this thought kept me awake. If I were to be born again, I would do many things. If I had not founded the Work of Mary[1] I would found a movement to help people celebrate Christmas. I would print the most beautiful Christmas cards in the world. I would make beautiful, artistic statues, both large and small. I would record poems and songs from the past and present. I would illustrate books for the young and the old about this "mystery of love." I would prepare scripts for plays or films.

I would do all this – and so much more!

Today I am grateful to the Church for having preserved the sacred images.

Twenty-five years ago I visited a country where atheism was prevalent. There I met a priest who used to carve statues of angels to remind people there is a heaven. Today I understand him much better. And the practical atheism today invading the world everywhere demands this. Certainly this fact of keeping Christmas while banning the New-born Babe is something very painful.

At least in our homes may we proclaim loudly Who is born, and prepare for him a celebration as never before.

CHIARA LUBICH

(Written while visiting Switzerland in December 1980.)

1) Work of Mary is the official name of the Focolare Movement.

Crib in terracotta by Ave Cerquetti, Centro Ave, Loppiano, Italy

feature article

FOCOLARE AND ECUMENISM IN GREAT BRITAIN

Compiled by Gabri Fallacara
with the assistance of Joan Back and Margaret Coen

On June 8, Chiara Lubich, the foundress of the Focolare Movement visited London. There she met the Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal George Basil Hume. Next at Lambeth Palace was her meeting with Dr. Robert Runcie, the Primate of the Church in England and Honorary head of the Anglican Communion.

In addition she had various other meetings and conversations of an ecumenical nature with the Archdeacon of Canterbury, Bernard Pawley and the Anglican Bishops, John Dennis, Richard Derby, Mark Wood, Clifford Bishop and Ronald Goodchild who are all friends of the Movement. She also had a meeting in London for the community of the Focolare Movement who came from all over Great Britain and Ireland.

This feature article includes a report on Chiara's meeting with Dr. Runcie, the text of Chiara's interview with the B.B.C. on the occasion of her visit, an outline of the Ecumenical work of the Focolare Movement in Great Britain, and extracts from interviews with the Anglican Bishop Oliver Tomkins and the Roman Catholic Bishop Charles Henderson.

TOP: On June 10, Chiara Lubich was received by Cardinal Hume. She gave him a report on the most recent developments in the life of the Focolare Movement in England.
ABOVE LEFT: Dr. Robert Runcie, the Archbishop of Canterbury, welcomes Chiara accompanied by Dimitri Bregant.
ABOVE RIGHT: After a private audience Chiara is presented with the **"Order of St. Augustine of Canterbury"** *in recognition of the work she has done, "within and for the Anglican Communion."*

THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY WELCOMES CHIARA LUBICH AT LAMBETH PALACE

In April 1980 during the last ecumenical trip of Anglicans and Catholics to Rome under the auspices of *Centro Uno*, the new Primate of the Anglican Church, the 102nd Archbishop of Centerbury, Dr. Robert Runcie sent a warm greeting in which he said: "As I take up the tasks involved in my new appointment, it gives me strength to know that you will continue to support me with your prayer in the work for the unity of all Christians. I want to take this opportunity of sending my personal greetings to the Focolare Movement and particularly to those taking part in the Ecumenical meeting at Rocca di Papa. I am certain that your theme: 'From Man to God' will be of help to all the Christians of the different traditions. Among you, there are bishops, priests and laity from the Anglican Church and my desire is that your experience of living, working and praying together might draw you closer to the one Lord and to one another."

On June 10 this year, Chiara visited London for a private audience with Archbishop Runcie at Lambeth Palace during which he expressed a great interest in both the spirituality and present developments of the Focolare Movement.

As soon as Chiara met Dr. Runcie, he greeted her saying what a privilege it was for him to welcome her to Lambeth and how he had also joyfully anticipated his later meeting with other members of the Movement who were to join them at lunch. He observed: "Whenever I travel to New York, Ireland or Canterbury, I meet people who greet me; they have a special look of joy on their faces and they say: 'We're from the Focolare.' Now I'm getting to recognize them as soon as I see them and I am able to say: 'You're from the Focolare!' even before they have introduced themselves. They bring a family atmosphere with them."

During their conversation Dr. Runcie told Chiara that he recognized the fruits of the Holy Spirit in the movement but that the organizational aspect of the movement was quite a mystery to him.

"However," he said, "Far better that you should aim for the fruits of the Spirit than get caught up in organization."

Chiara was able to remove the veil of mystery by describing how the movement was organized and its basic structure.

Dr. Runcie expressed his gratitude to the Focolare for the assurances of prayer and concern saying how he continued to be amazed by the fact that he managed to fulfill the commitments his position required of him and that it certainly had something to do with prayer and being linked together in the body of Christ. He added that when people asked him about his work, they always expected an establishment type of answer but that his reply was instead: "My task is to encourage good things and to get rid of the obstacles hindering those things." He went on to express his hope that Chiara, "might tell me how I can get rid of obstacles so that good things can happen also through the Focolare Movement."

In this simple and spontaneous relationship, Chiara began telling Dr. Runcie how God had worked in bringing about the Movement. She spoke of her choice of God as the only ideal worth spending her life for, in the midst of war when everything around appeared so transient and of how, together with her group of friends, she began to discover that the words of the Gospel were words of life to be lived here and now. She described the Christian revolution that began to explode around herself and her friends as this way of living caught on. She told Dr. Runcie what it had been for her to understand the prayer of Jesus for unity and how she and her friends had felt it to be their very own 'Magna Carta,' the reason for which they had been born.

Chiara explained how the movement had grown in the Catholic Church with all its various vocations coming to life, one by one, such as the consecrated lay men and women living in small communities, the groups of priests who also live a communal life in Focolare Centers and the married couples who like the focolarini make promises and belong to a Focolare and after that the vocation of the volunteers and the emergence of the mass movements of young people, of families and of groups of people who feel called to renew the social fabric of society.

At this point Chiara explained how without any planning, the

LEFT: Dr. Runcie and Chiara Lubich prayed together with the small group who joined them after their meeting in the historical chapel of Lambeth Palace.

BELOW: After lunch at Lambeth Palace, Dr. Runcie meets with twelve Anglican representatives of the Focolare Movement. From the right: Jane Airdale, Moira Hodgson and Callam Slipper.

Movement had suddenly become ecumenical through a meeting with three Lutheran pastors and the attraction that a spirituality of unity seemed to hold for all the Lutherans who henceforth began to participate in the activities of the movement. She described how shortly afterwards, three Anglican priests also met the movement and how, impressed by the atmosphere they had experienced between the Lutherans and Catholics, they had encouraged Chiara to visit England. It was then, she said that she had met Dr. Ramsey and later on Dr. Coggan, both of whom had encouraged the Movement's growth among Anglicans.

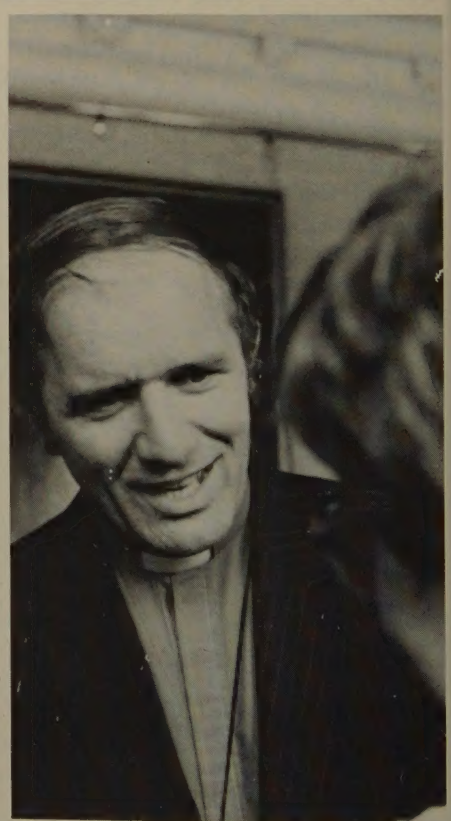
"This is how the Movement progresses," said Chiara, "guided by the Holy Spirit and what we experience is simply the 'living of the Kingdom of God in our midst.' This 'living of the Kingdom of God' happens among people from different Churches because as baptized Christians, we can have Jesus among us and He enlightens us and heals the wounds in Christianity."

The Archbishop asked Chiara to enlarge on the commitment involved in each of the vocations. Chiara explained how for a long time, the Focolare Movement in England was made up of numbers of people who liked its spirituality and wanted to put it into practice but how it was only in relatively recent years that the vocations within the Focolare Movement had begun to flourish also among the Anglicans of the Movement. Chiara said that it was partly because of these developments that she had hoped for a meeting with the Archbishop.

Dr. Runcie and Chiara went on then to discuss in greater depth some arrangements and ideas regarding the development of the Anglican Focolare Movement in Great Britain. Chiara presented Dr. Runcie with detailed reports on the life of the Movement in this country and also a map indicating the numbers and distribution of groups of people living its spirituality.

Later, towards lunchtime, they were joined by a small group including Mrs. Rosalind Runcie, Dr. Runcie's wife, the Archbishop's secretary, Richard Carter, Terry Waite, his assistant for Anglican Communion Affairs, the Bishop of Stepney, Jim Thompson, a former student of the Archbishop, Mrs. Margaret Pawley, the Archdeacon of Canterbury's wife, Eli Folonari, Chiara's secretary, both representatives of the Focolare Movement in England, Mari Ponticaccia and Dimitri Bregant, Professor Zanghi and Gabri Fallacara from *Centro Uno* in Rome.

It was in the presence of this group that the Archbishop presented Chiara with a cross, "The Order of St. Augustine of Canterbury," to express his appreciation of the ecumenical work done both within and for the Anglican Communion. (The cross was most recently awarded — through the person of Terry Waite on behalf of the Archbishop — to the British Missionaries imprisoned in Iran, in



The Anglican Bishop Jim Thompson of Stepney (London) present at the meeting in Lambeth Palace.

recognition of their courageous testimony of faith.) The presentation to Chiara was impressive both for its solemnity and simplicity.

Throughout lunch, Dr. Runcie and Chiara continued their conversation together with the Anglican Bishop of Stepney, Jim Thompson. They spoke of the ARCIC (Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission) documents, of the progress made in ecumenism through theological dialogue and of the anticipation of John Paul II's planned visit in 1982 — when for the first time ever, a pope will cross the threshold of Canterbury Cathedral.

The conversation took the form of a dialogue. Bishop Thompson wanted to know what influence the characteristic love and unity of the Movement had on the existing structures of society, for example in the world of politics. Chiara explained how members of the Movement who were involved in a particular field of activity would try to establish the presence of Jesus in their midst so that this relationship might be present among two of them and then these two, whether they were in the world of politics or medicine or art would share together their experience and ideas and that their subsequent activities would be enlightened by Jesus in their midst. "All our efforts," she explained, "are concentrated on bringing a supernatural dimension into human existence, or in other words, causing an explosion of the divine."

"Yes," agreed Bishop Thompson, "if we were really prepared to put aside our own point of view in Christ's name so as to listen to the other's point of view, then the whole nature of all our conversations, whether political, theological or whatever would change."

Dr. Runcie wanted to know what attitude the Movement would adopt over certain areas of conflict. "What would your reaction be for example, if someone in the Movement left his or her partner and remarried?" he inquired.

"That would depend," replied Chiara. "If it were a Catholic, then he or she would have to follow the ruling of the Catholic Church. If it were not a Catholic, then the appropriate ruling of his or her Church would apply." Chiara pointed out that this situation rarely arose in the Movement. "Our guidlines are really Gospel ones but each person also belongs to a Church, in a parish, in a diocese and so has to live according to the rules of his or her Church."

On a lighter note, Dr. Runcie remembered how a few days prior to his meeting with Chiara he had met a group of young people in Dublin who had told him how pleased they were about the forthcoming meeting. He was interested to discover how Chiara kept in touch with all the members of the Movement throughout the world and whether it was through letters or information sheets.

Chiara explained about her telephone conference call every fifteen days, booked through Switzerland and linking up the representatives of all the five continents. "In ten minutes we can communicate the most important news and this in turn can be communicated to the whole community. It makes us one family and for us, this is very important," she added.

Immediately after lunch, Dr. Runcie was introduced to twelve representatives of the Anglican members of the Focolare Movement in Great Britain. "You're Anglican?" questioned the pleasantly surprised Archbishop as they met him one after the other. He was particularly interested in the recent tour of Sarah Finch, a young actress who had been acting in plays specifically written for children. Close by to Sarah was Lesley, another Anglican focolarina in the same Focolare Center who added: "You can depend on our prayer and unity." Among the group was Stuart Burns, an Anglican priest, the Sayer family with Robin and Jan from Walsingham and Malcolm Pyman, Mike Robinson, and Callam Slipper who live in the Focolare Centers of London and Liverpool.

The variety of age and commitments in the movement suggested the originality — which seemed to please the Archbishop — of a spirituality which can be lived, because it is a spirit of unity, by people from all backgrounds and Churches.

"I can hardly believe it to be true," he exclaimed as he invited them to join him in prayer in the historical chapel of Lambeth Palace, witness of so many significant events in English Church history. There he led the prayer asking for Christ's strength to fulfill God's command, for that love of Christ which brings unity and communion, and for Christ's courage in overcoming the difficulties on the journey towards the visible unity of their Churches.

•

On her return to Italy, Chiara was interviewed by Vatican Radio regarding her visit to the Archbishop of Canterbury. This is how she summed it up:

"What impressed me more than the words that we said was the welcome I received and the person of the Archbishop himself. What stood out, not in any ordinary way but in rather a special way, was the spiritual depth of Dr. Runcie. He wanted to know how the Movement is progressing and recalled my meetings with Dr. Ramsey and with Dr. Coggan, meetings which had prepared the ground for this meeting with the Primate. The present Archbishop of Canterbury is aware of the role the Movement has played during its existence in Great Britain and this gave me great joy. Dr. Runcie was keen to know how the Movement is structured and what was particularly apparent to him as I described it was the work of the Holy Spirit in it. He also appreciated the value of the Word of Life, lived every month by all the members and I think that he was impressed also by the fact that from the very beginning of the Movement, God has made us read and understand the Gospel in what I would say is a new way, particularly that page which we felt was our 'Magna Carta,' the testament of Jesus."

THE ECUMENICAL JOURNEY OF THE FOCOLARE MOVEMENT IN GREAT BRITAIN

In the distant past of 1960 (it seems almost medieval now) the Archbishops of Canterbury and York sent an observer to the Second Vatican Council so as to report back to them on what was at the bottom of the Ecumenical movement. The man chosen was the Anglican Canon Pawley who is today the Archdeacon of Canterbury. In a public address in 1967 he said: "The first people I came across or rather, the ones towards whom God led me, were Chiara Lubich and the Focolarini." The meeting took place on May 19, 1961.

"In my opinion," he continued, "and it is the opinion of many among us, the Focolare Movement is one of the many movements in the Roman Catholic Church, raised up by God's providence in this particular era to make a special contribution to that understanding which we hope, is coming into its own among us. It is extremely difficult to sum it up or to say exactly who they are, but I would describe them in these words: they are an evangelical phenomenon."

Pawley wanted the observers from other churches present at the Second Vatican Council to get to know the Movement. To this end he organized a meeting on November 14, 1963 which was attended by Dr. Lukas Vischer, the first observer from the World Council of Churches and then director of Faith and Order, Professor Albert C. Outler, of the Methodist World Council, and other Anglican clergymen. Their meeting with Chiara, which lasted about four hours, proved to be a surprise for the observers who had never thought that in the Catholic Church there could possibly be grass root movements of this kind which were both new and yet (though carefully examined) approved of by the hierarchy. They expressed their hope of continued contact with the Movement and so it was.

During that same time Cardinal Heenan met with some members of the Movement in Rome and on that occasion confirmed his invitation to us to begin our work in Liverpool, in his own former Archdiocese.

As a result, on November 18, 1963, the first women's Focolare was opened in England, or more precisely, in Liverpool the English city renowned for its conflict between Catholics and non-Catholics and now to become a center irradiating the ideal of unity, according to the line of Pope John, which was: "To emphasize what unites us and not what separates us."

At Pentecost, 1965, three ministers, Fr. Roe, Fr. Pugh and Fr. Wilkes came to take part in a meeting held by *Centro Uno*, the Ecumenical Secretariat of the Focolare Movement. The talk Chiara gave was to open a new dimension: "All that belongs to the Movement is yours! We have been separated for centuries: cathedrals, religious monuments belong to one Church or another; we want to start right here and put into common all our possessions: all that is ours is yours."

That group returned to England determined to spread as much as possible, this evangelical commitment which could be lived out in daily life.

The relationship, begun between the faithful of the two Churches, came to a climax in 1965, with an episode which was all the more exceptional given its timing (it was still only a year since the publication of *Unitatis Redintegratio*, Vatican II's decree on ecumenism). The chapter of Liverpool's Anglican Cathedral invited the Focolare Movement to talk about its way of life and its "love beyond boundaries" in a hall at the Anglican Cathedral.

The Focolarini spoke, along with the Catholic Archbishop of Liverpool, George Beck, Canon Pawley and the deacon of the Anglican cathedral, Edward Patey who had done much to encourage this meeting. He had invited the Anglican clergy of Liverpool to it and had written to a group of leading members of the low church, saying: "I think that this meeting will prove to be another significant step forward in the relationship between Anglicans and Roman Catholics in Liverpool."

On November 17, 1965, about fifty people met in the cathedral, including eighteen Anglican ministers. Canon Pawley introduced Chiara Lubich and at the end of his speech added that he had met the Pope three weeks earlier and had said to him: "This type of meeting on a spiritual level seems to me to be something to be included in our ecumenical work!" Paul VI had answered: "How right you are!"

During this, her first visit to England, Chiara spoke several times and offered to Catholics and Christians of other denominations, the basic guidelines of the Focolare's spirituality, thus laying the foundations for the future of the Movement.

In a joint declaration on March 23, 1966 the Primate of the Church of England, Michael Ramsey, and Pope Paul VI said that they wished "the faithful of both Communions to be moved by feelings of respect, appreciation and brotherly love." In the spirit of this declaration, the Focolare Movement held the first

ecumenical conference for Anglicans and Catholics from April 11 to 17 that year. Seventy five people came from the United Kingdom and this was the beginning of a series of meetings held periodically from then on, eleven in all so far. The Secretariat for Christian Unity has always been present at these meetings. The Vice-president Msgr. Ramon Torrella said at last year's meeting, "Often we can only do small things, make small gestures which never hit the headlines because they are not sensational, but it is precisely these small things which are important. Wherever spiritual ecumenism is missing, any ecumenical activity, however well meant, is dead. And the Focolare Movement underlines very much the life of the spirit, a truly spiritual ecumenism."

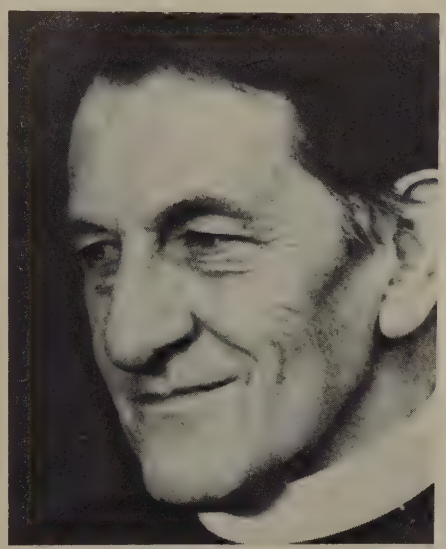
On July 1, 1966 Chiara Lubich was invited to Lambeth Palace by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Michael Ramsey. She was accompanied by Canon John Findlow, then director of the Anglican Center in Rome, and the Anglican observer at the third session of Vatican II.

After listening to Chiara speak about the Movement's spirituality, the Anglican primate invited her to spread it in Great Britain: "I am very grateful for the hand of God in this work. I hope that you will be able to visit us for longer next time. You have much to offer to the Church of England. There are many ways in which you can develop the contacts and spiritual communion with Anglicans in this country, that their hearts might be warmed by this spirit. I give you my blessing."

Cardinal Bea wrote to Chiara about this meeting on July 26: "We really must thank the Lord who is always marvellous in His ways, for the way in which He prepared and accompanied with His grace this new and very important step both for your work and for the cause of unity. . . ."

At the same time, as the Movement was spreading across the country, a men's and women's Focolare were opened in London. The first of the Movement's ecumenical summer meetings was held in Twickenham, the first of a series of annual week-long meetings, attended by Christians of different traditions. The Archbishop of Canterbury sent a message.

In January 1967, with the approval of the Anglican Primate, Chiara Lubich received another invitation, extended to a Catholic for the first time, to speak in Canterbury to members of the Anglican Church during the week of prayer for Christian unity. On January 21, more than 300 people came from all over Britain.



The Anglican Archdeacon, Bernard Pawley has given continuous encouragement to the ecumenical work of the Focolare in England. Together with his wife, he wrote, **"Rome and Canterbury through four centuries,"** *published in 1974, soon to be reprinted with a new important chapter and in a revised form.*

Once again Canon Pawley introduced the foundress of the Movement. He said: "These are people who are certainly able to build a bridge which many will cross in both directions. We want what God wants; this is an immense mutual gift for us to get to know one another." Those present included Anglicans, Methodists, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Baptists, Quakers, members of the Salvation Army and Catholics.

From that day ecumenical meetings multiplied throughout England and Scotland. Friendship at grass roots' level between Christians of both Churches spread in the South of England, in Coventry, up to Yorkshire and in the universities of Warwick, York, Leeds and Canterbury. Catholic and Anglican parish priests, from the same town, called together their parishioners to introduce them to this new way of life. The Focolare Centers were called up and down the country to introduce their life and spirituality and held weekend meetings in different areas of the country for groups of 200/300 people. Many began to join in this journey towards unity, sharing the same ideal of living the Gospel, in London, Maryport, Liverpool, Walsingham and Somerset.

This ecumenical progress was encouraged by the Anglican bishops of Liverpool and London and in 1969 the then Archbishop of York, Stuart Blanch, organized some meetings during the Lambeth Conference (the assembly of Anglican bishops from all over the world) to introduce the Focolare Movement to the Conference members.

Groups of the Movement sprang up in different towns, with people of different denominations belonging to them, including all the traditions of the Anglican Church. Two or three day missions were held in many Anglican dioceses across the United Kingdom.

In May 1971 Chiara came back to London to talk to a group of Anglicans who belonged to the Movement, about its development in Great Britain.

In January 1973 the Bishop of Exeter Robert Mortimer said while visiting Loppiano: "The Archbishop of Canterbury, Michael Ramsey, has been very happy about and interested in my visit here. He knows a lot about Loppiano and the Focolare Movement and it has given him great joy. . . . I believe that the Holy Spirit has brought about this great Movement so as to build a bridge."

Paul VI regularly greeted groups of about 150 or more who were taking part in the ecumenical conferences organized by the Movement's Centro Uno. On April 21, 1976 he said: "We are very happy to welcome Bishop Wickham and Canon Pawley from

(continued on page 13)

INTERVIEW with the BBC

Q. Bernard Jackson
A. Chiara Lubich

By kind permission of Mr. Bernard Jackson.

Q. Chiara, you started a Movement called the Focolare Movement in Italy in 1943. What were the aims of the Movement?

A. The aim of the Movement is to work with the Church to bring about the Testament of Jesus: "May they all be one," to revitalize unity among Catholics and with the help of the Holy Spirit who is also working in other Movements to bring about unity with our Christian brothers. But this is not the whole aim of the Movement because Catholic and non-Catholic Christians should witness together to the world, through the Movement too, their faith in Christ. They should witness to a world which does not believe so that it might believe.

Q. We hear a lot about unity in this country, and often people think it has died a death, and that church unity is not happening as it should. What do you feel? Is unity progressing as it should?

A. No I don't agree! I have recently been reading some documents drawn up by Anglicans and Catholics from Joint commissions and these documents indicate that real progress is taking place in the journey towards unity. The same thing is also happening between Catholics and Lutherans, though to a lesser extent. And a great deal of progress is being made between Orthodox and Catholics.

Q. We're always talking about unity here in Britain, between Anglicans, Catholics, Methodists, and the Free Churches, but does anything really happen?

A. You can see it happening on two levels, from the point of view of the hierarchy and the theologians and from the point of view of ordinary people. At the level of the hierarchy and the theologians — I'm referring now to Catholics and Anglicans because at the moment I'm more familiar with recent developments among them than with Methodists or other denominations — I can say that things are definitely going ahead. There are some really encouraging signs. Thoughts have emerged from these three documents regarding Church teaching on the Eucharist, Ministry and Authority, which amaze you and make you understand just how much the Holy Spirit is at work and what surprises He has in store for us. At the grass-root level, things are going extremely well too and there is tremendous hope. Catholics are more receptive now than they ever were towards Anglicans and I think the same is true of Anglican attitudes towards Catholics. This week, as well as going to see Cardinal Hume, I was able to meet with the Primate of the Anglican Church, the Archbishop of Canterbury. Today I will be meeting with four Anglican Bishops and yesterday too, I met with another Anglican Bishop. Certainly there is room for unity to spread more at a grass-root level but as far as quality of content is concerned I'm convinced that progress is being made and the outlook is very promising.

Q. Is the ultimate aim of unity that we will all worship in the same Church?

A. It's obvious: One flock, One shepherd, but how this One Church will be made up remains to be seen. The Holy Spirit may want to preserve many traditions that we have, or different ways of doing things and even rites. I'm speaking very generally now with regard to all the churches. Without any doubt there will be unity — Unity in Charity and Faith.

Q. One wonders if the fact that we have different Christian denominations in this country adds a certain vitality to the Christian Church. We're not all one and therefore there is one faction, not exactly fighting against the other, but it means that they've got something to grind against. . . .

A. In my opinion, divisions are always negative but when people really start to love God, when they really want to love Him, everything works together for good. So tomorrow when we are all one, our various ways of doing things, our customs and our different ways of interpreting the same truth — in which we believe in the same way and with the same faith — will be an enrichment rather than a loss.

Q. Each Church will retain its own identity then?

A. Yes but "lost" in unity.

Q. What you are saying is of great importance.

A. As long as unity is safeguarded, each one will maintain its own identity and it's right that it should. This is how the Church is made up. The Church is One but is at the same time made up of many local churches in which the whole Church is present. Each local church has its own

characteistics. For example, African churches have their own characteristics and are very different from English churches or Argentinian churches. So plurality is inherent in unity. In fact what do you unite if not things which are different? Uniting two things which are the same isn't really uniting. You unite things which differ. The important thing is that there is the same faith throughout a variety of expressions.

Q. When we look back to 1943, we see you having this idea of unity and yet it has not really entered many people's minds except in the last fifteen to twenty years, so you were one of the first pioneers of unity. Was it very difficult to get this idea across?

A. It is true that the Movement is a pioneer of unity but there were other pioneers of unity before that, for example in Italy one of our most illustrious and well-known members Igino Giordani, worked a great deal for unity and he was already talking about it in 1925 and this was in Italy which is not a country with a long ecumenical tradition.

Q. How did this idea of unity come about?

A. The idea of unity was born among us like this: It was war time and everything was being destroyed by bombs. We were very young, faced with this destruction and the Lord made us understand that we had to choose an Ideal for our lives that couldn't be destroyed by bombs. As all the other Ideals were being shattered we saw that only God remained. We wanted to know what to do in order to live a life based on this Ideal and we understood that to do this, we had to love Him by doing His Will well. The Lord fixed our attention on a particular page of the gospel, the Testament of Jesus, where He says that all may be one. We understood that this was the "Magna Carta" of the Movement. Jesus taught us how to make unity among ourselves, with our Catholic brothers and sisters and later on with non-Catholics, who although they do not have a faith that is exactly the same, there can be an immense reciprocal love which is the love which Jesus demands of His disciples. But you are right, I had never found a book in which the word unity was written. I do remember finding something in 1947 which referred to unity and I clung onto it as something quite extraordinary. After this came the Council which spoke of unity in all its documents and this brought a whole re-awakening of ecumenism so that now unity is spoken about in all the Churches and this has been the work of the Holy Spirit. Before, each Church considered the others as almost dead, as if they didn't exist, but now in nearly all Christians there is a new desire to be One and we are more like a big wounded body which feels the wounds in itself and wants to heal them. This is a good sign because if you want to get better then you do get better. It's true also that when two people want to get married they put aside all their difficulties and search out all the positive points to present to their parents and relatives so as to be able to reach unity. The Churches too, now that they really want to unite, because they want the healing of Christ, are searching out all the reasons for uniting and smoothing away all the secondary differences which are so often due to historical reasons.

Q. Was it the idea of unity that carried the Movement forward, or did the Movement happen first and then unity come afterwards?

A. The Ideal has made the Movement. It is an idea that gives birth to a Movement otherwise it isn't born. The idea with which the Movement was born is still its key idea.

Q. So the idea came out of an idea for unity rather than the idea coming from the Movement later on?

A. Yes! When this idea of unity was born I was with about seven or eight of my friends and it was as if God was giving us a very beautiful sermon, "Be careful, spend your life for something worthwhile." The Testament of Jesus, although it's a very difficult passage, was lit up for us and we felt we'd understood it. So we asked Jesus to give us the strength to bring it about, to do what the Church has done throughout the centuries, to fulfill this Testament of Jesus. You see, it was something that we did together. The Focolare are centers where people try to be one always with Jesus in their midst, to be real witnesses to the world. The world believes if it sees people united: "This is how they will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." At the beginning they were called "Focolares of Unity" and the Movement, the "Movement of Unity."

Q. Why hasn't the Focolare Movement been as successful in this country as in other countries?

A. There is a basic answer to that! First of all good never makes headlines. If we want to get into the papers or onto the television or radio, we have to do something scandalous. If we perform miracles, it doesn't even get a mention. Secondly, I think that in many other countries such as Italy we are almost entirely Catholic and so dialogue is easier. In Brazil we are predominantly Catholic, in Argentina we are Catholic and these are countries where the Movement has developed most. The same is true of France and Spain and the Philipines where the Movement is widespread and so it is obvious that where we are all Catholics it is a little easier. Here in England only ten percent of the population is Catholic and so it is harder. There is another reason; it depends on how long we have been there. In Italy we began in 1943 while in England it was in 1965,

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twenty two years later. This doesn't mean that Anglicans or members of other denominations don't appreciate this spirituality. On the contrary, they see it as a medicine from the Holy Spirit to heal the wounds of division. Possibly it's because of the short time we've been here — as well as the other reasons I've mentioned — that England seems to have been left behind, but I think it's chiefly because good doesn't hit the headlines. We don't use the mass media except within the Movement — we don't have our own public TV or radio network or a paper — all our means of communication are for the internal use of the Movement. But look how things are! When the Pope came to our Family Fest recently on May 3, there were 20,000 people, all married people, present in the Stadium in Rome and all the journalists from the biggest newspapers came to see if the Pope was going to talk about abortion. They thought they were going to get a scandal if the Pope did talk about abortion. They did not come to see these 20,000 people from all over the world who are committed to building healthy, Christian families. No! This did not interest them.

Q. Has the Movement developed as you always thought it would or is it exceeding your expectations? Do you have any disappointments or are there things you would like to change?

A. There is something I want to make clear. I never wanted anything. The initiative in starting the Movement wasn't mine. When I began I was twenty three years old and I knew nothing. The initiative is all God's. So this question needs to be turned around and directed to God: "Are you happy with what these children of yours have done?"

Q. Obviously within the Movement because you are the foundress you are treated with a certain amount of respect, and you get a certain adulation from the members. How do you cope with that?

A.Someone else asked me a question like that recently and wanted to know how I reconciled being at the head of such a vast Movement with living an authentic Christian life. My reply is this: I don't try to guide the Movement. I try to give an example first and foremost and then to speak. This helps me to be what I have to be. It is quite probable that there is a certain amount of love shown to me and maybe it's sometimes a little exaggerated especially by the smallest ones, the youngest who don't know how else to express the love that they feel. Just as we do with God — we express our love for Him with feelings first and later we learn that we have to express it with our will and with our actions. Often they sound excited when they are waiting for me to arrive but I understand it — it's because they are young and enthusiastic. This is typical of young people and it's something you have to allow for in them. It does exist but it's enough to know how to understand it and possibly moderate it, with simplicity though, because if we become complicated they no longer know how to act.

Q. Are you, Chiara, above contradiction in the Movement? Does whatever you say go, or do people argue with you or say that you are wrong?

A.The Movement isn't directed by just one person, it is directed by a body called the Co-ordinating Council in conjunction with myself as President. They're not simply advisors but members of a body and specialized in one field or another. Our way of living is the way of unity. We never do anything if we are not all in agreement. For us the "majority rule" doesn't hold — fifty one percent or whatever. What matters to us is unanimity. We have to unanimous in all decisions because if we are not united what sort of unity are we taking to other people?

Q. Do you ever doubt that what you are doing is not what God wants you to do?

A. Well, in little things I try not to do my own will. In big things I always submit myself to the Church authorities; for our Rule, for example or for big projects that we have to do. We are the faithful of the Church, perfectly inserted in the Church and especially in the Pope, because ours is an inter-diocesan movement.

Q. You have never married, Chiara, and I suppose this is because all your time has been taken up with the Movement. Do you consider that to be more important than to become a wife and mother?

A. Yes, I think so, because spiritual things are of more value than human things. Even though the mission of a natural mother is very great, a spiritual mother is of greater value because this task has been given to her by God. But I want to make something clear: it isn't that I didn't get married so as to be able to dedicate myself to the Movement. I was called by God to marry God, without even knowing that the Movement would be born.

Q. Like a nun?

A. Unfortunately there is this idea that the only person who chooses God is a nun, or someone who enters a convent. This is ridiculous! Every Christian must choose God. Then he must choose God in His will which is to marry or not to marry, to work in one area of life or another. This is what we have to get rid of: A Christianity without God in the first place. The conversion that God demands — "Convert yourself and believe in the Gospel" — is to put God in the first place. To do what the Focolarini do, for example. But fathers of families should do this too and office workers, laborers, M.D.'s, dustmen, mothers, children, everybody, otherwise we're not Christians.

The Anglican representatives of the Focolare Movement in England, with Chiara Lubich and Mrs. Margaret Pawley, wife of the Archdeacon Bernard Pawley, after the audience at Lambeth Palace.

In the Focolare at Thurleigh Road, Chiara met with some Anglican Bishops, friends of the Movement. From the left: Chiara, Lesley Ellison, Mrs. Betty Derby, the Anglican Bishop Ronald Goodchild, Richard Derby of Sherwood and Mark Wood of Hereford, Mari Ponticaccia, Mrs. Ivy Bishop, Eli Folonari.

Ivy, wife of Bishop Clifford Bishop who also attended this meeting shares with Chiara her joy for the spirituality of the Movement lived in her family.

(continued from page 9)

the Anglican Communion, and we also welcome the whole ecumenical group from England. . . . We pray that your meeting in Rocca di Papa might be another step in the dialogue between Anglicans and Catholics, and that going ahead together humbly, in newness of life, we might obtain perfect unity in Our Lord, Jesus Christ."

After receiving the Templeton Prize in April 1977, Chiara Lubich met Dr. Coggan, who encouraged her again in the ecumenical work of the Movement in the Anglican Church.

Since 1978, as in other countries where the Movement is present, groups have been formed who try to put into practice the Word of God. Innumerable transformations of people's lives have occurred as well as a re-evangelization of many people of all Christian traditions. In Great Britain and Ireland some groups of the Word of Life are Catholic, some Anglican, and most of them (out of a total of 262), give a common witness. This type of spirituality favors spiritual ecumenism; you discover the joy of being able to share a Christian life in common, while accepting the suffering of the divisions still to be overcome.

The Movement has often been invited to take part in or run meetings organized during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. This year, for example, the Anglican Bishop of Worcester, Oliver Tomkins, invited the Focolare, on behalf of the local Council of Churches, to organize a weekend ending with an ecumenical service which 400 people attended. The Gen took part in the Easter pilgrimage led by Dr. Coggan in 1979.

All the other meetings of the Movement are ecumenical. At present the members and adherents of the Movement total about 30,000 in all, and about 9,000 of these are Anglican.

In the near future a course of ecumenical formation will begin for Anglicans and Catholics of the Movement to study together the steps already proposed in the official dialogues, particularly of the Anglo-Roman Catholic Commission (ARCIC).

THE NEED FOR LOCAL ECUMENISM

The Focolare Movement makes its own particular contribution to what is generally called "local ecumenism," in other words, the building up of a direct link between Christians of different traditions. We interviewed two bishops on this topic. One is Dr. Oliver Tomkins, an Anglican bishop and pioneer of ecumenism, and the other, Bishop Charles Henderson, the Catholic auxiliary Bishop of the Southwark Archdiocese of London and and responsible for ecumenism there.

BISHOP TOMKINS: "IT IS SURPRISING TO SEE HOW A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP DISARMS SUSPICIONS."

Bishop Oliver Tomkins, former Anglican Bishop of Bristol and author of "A time for Unity," *published in 1964, has been actively involved in ecumenism for more than fifty-five years. He is well known for his ecumenical contribution in both national and international spheres, in the World Council of Churches and the British Council of Churches. He was secretary to the Committee of Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches from 1945 to 1959. He has worked closely with fellow pioneers of unity from the Catholic and Orthodox Churches both before and after the Second Vatican Council. At present he is living in Worcester, where local ecumenical activities continue to benefit from both his insights and sound ecumenical experience. Here are some of the questions Margaret Coen put to him:*

Is it possible for the Church on earth to reach a unity which is visible and organic?

I believe that it is God's command and, therefore, it is possible. I feel that the difficulty lies with our disobedience, not with His good ideas. If the problem of organic unity tarries, it is because we do not sufficiently believe that it is the will of God. This is where the crisis comes.

At some time in your life you will have read for the very first time the prayer of Jesus to the Father for unity. Over the years how has your understanding of that prayer deepened, or changed?

Yes, I think it is absolutely unfathomable and I go on realizing how little I understand of what is implicit in it. It has always been one of the charters of the ecumenical movement. The first world conference on Faith and Order in 1927 began with the sermon on Jesus' prayer: "That they all may be one that the world may believe," and ever since I have seen in chapter seventeen of St. John, the most profound meditation on the nature of Christian unity. Profound because what it sketches is the absolutely infinite unity of love between the Father and the Son, so close as to be an identity. And it seems quite ridiculous to imagine that the Church in history can ever approximate to that intimate and close communion, and yet that is what is set before us. That prayer of Our Lord that we might be one with each other in some sort of sense in the same way as He is one with the Father is the imperative which compels us to go on working away at something which humanly speaking just looks absurd and impossible.

What importance do you attach to local ecumenical initiatives?

I remember a saying of G.K. Chesterton: "If you want to make a thing live, make it local," and I think that this is very true and I was always aware, even when I was working at World Council level, that all the things we talked and wrote about were meaningless unless they were happening at the strictly local level where Christians pass each other on the street on the way to different churches. It's only when we sit up and realize that our neighbor in Christ literally lives next door that the thing begins to come alive for most people, and that's why I think local Councils of Churches have such a key role in the ecumenical movement as a whole, because it is there that millions of ordinary everyday Christians can suddenly come alive to the fact that Christ is in their fellow Christian and that, therefore, they must take him seriously and approach him with love.

What would you say is the role of the ordinary layman in the search for unity as opposed to that of the minister or the theologian?

I think chiefly at a local level of carrying the weight of ecumenical co-operation locally and especially the laity in bearing a common Christian witness in their daily jobs — teaching, industry, business, professions and so forth — where other people can see that what Christians have in common as they face their

daily responsibilities is infinitely more important and more compelling than the things that separate them.

In your book *A time for Unity* you mention "the silent monastery." Would you like to explain what it is exactly?

Well that was a pharse that Paul Couturier used to use. He was the very humble and obscure schoolmaster priest in Lyon in France, who really single handed transformed the whole concept of praying for Christian unity. Until then we tended in effect to say in our prayers: Dear God, please make other Christians just like us. Couturier evolved the idea that we must pray for the unity of the people of Christ as He wills and when He wills. Now, put like that, prayer for unity becomes something which we as Catholics, Orthodox, Protestants, Anglicans, can share in praying together and it was this, this silent, this invisible monastery of prayer going on all the time which he had in mind, of ordinary Christians up and down the world praying away in their daily life for the unity of Christ's people as He wills and when He wills.

Nevertheless many people still find it very difficult to get away from the fear of absorption. What advice would you give?

I think that the best guard against that is to have real living contact with Christians from another tradition. It's astonishing how old suspicions of Protestants for Catholics and vice-versa break down as soon as you enter into a really close personal relationship and it's that which dissolves, disarms suspicion

BISHOP HENDERSON: "LAY PEOPLE NEED TO MEET ONE ANOTHER AS CHRISTIANS."

On June 15 in the Thurleigh Rd. Focolare in London we had supper and spent the evening with Bishop Charles Henderson, the auxiliary bishop in Southwark with special care for ecumenism in the archdiocese. In the course of the evening Gabri Fallacara from "Centro Uno" interviewed Bishop Henderson. The following are extracts from their conversation:

What progress is ecumenism making in your diocese?

I am personally in contact with Anglican bishops, superintendents in the Methodist and Baptist churches and moderators of the United Reformed Church. Over the years we have come to know each other as friends, respecting our differences, but now because we are friends we are able to be honest with each other. That honesty enables us to accept our differences and because we are friends we recognize that it is a conviction the other person holds even though it may be totally different from what I believe. However because you recognize the value of that person who is a friend, you can accept more easily that he disagrees with you. At the same time, his seeing you as a friend makes him think: there must be something good in what the fellow is saying because he is a good person and this eases discussion. It helps people to express what they believe more readily and it helps the differences to disappear because when you hear someone else explain their beliefs, you start to realize that there is unity and that there are different approaches from different people. You begin to understand more fully that since all the thoughts expressed are related to Christ, you have a unity straight away — so words can differ.

What happens at your meetings?

In this diocese, friendship on that level is growing very well. We meet a few times during the year. I meet the Anglican bishops and the senior members of other churches in Kent and South London. We are at present studying Baptism, Jesus Christ and resurrection aspects, together, and we are expressing what we believe. In South London we are arranging to publish — if we can achieve it — a whole set of meditations prepared by all of us together on the truths of the Church. So we are sharing and we are trusting.

What is happening among the laity?

The biggest problem is that they do not know one another at a human level. They meet at work, in the streets, on buses and on social occasions, but they have never learned to meet as Christians. My personal desire is to encourage ecumenical groups. I hate calling them study groups or prayer groups. I want to call them friendship groups. The name at the back of my mind is 'Tabor' groups. Mount Tabor brings the Old and the New Testament together, Moses and Elias. The Father and Christ and the apostles shared something very special with Christ. The main purpose of the groups would be simply to encourage friendship and to do so by reading the scriptures and talking together and there would be an enrichment and a gradual drawing together. That's what I would like to present to the dioceses.

How can the Focolare Movement contribute to this in London?

What happens is that every once in a while people are invited to each other's Churches and they pray for unity. The people are good and genuine and sincere but the grouping is artificial because the human friendship, the community level, hasn't been achieved. This is what I want to encourage. I see that you are doing this because you are crossing the boundaries in your spirit and your way of life, which is, of course, very important.

FOOTNOTE: The "Centro Uno," often mentioned in this feature article, is the ecumenical center of the Focolare Movement. For other names concerning members of the Focolare Movement (such as Focolarini, Gen, Volunteers, etc.) see inside backcover.

GEN VERDE

by ELLEN C. POLLOCK

19 young women in concert

"I do not believe in anything, but something touched me tonight. I felt dragged out of the monotony of my everyday life. You made me think and hope that there is a way to build a world of love for all, whether they believe or not. I want to give my best to help you build it."

"You gave me new strength and new courage in my life as a Christian."

"Tonight I feel like telling everybody that God does exist and is close to each one of us no matter who we are and how we are."

"There is so much harmony among you when you are on stage. You are radiant with joy — so much of it that it makes you hope unity will be possible one day."

"The beauty of Christianity transpires through your show together with the reality of mutual love."

"Recently I was experiencing an absolute emptiness in me, but your songs have awakened in my heart emotions which I thought belonged to the past. I want to give my share and help the world walk toward what is good."

"Tonight, for the first time, I cried tears of joy."

"It was something unique, exceptional! I wish I too could live for God alone."

"What a modern way to spread the word of God."

The impressions printed here to the left are just some examples of the many which are shared with the members of Gen Verde after their shows. They are nineteen young women from twelve countries which include Canada, the Philippines, Austria, Brazil, Columbia, Italy, and Scotland.

"Our Home Called Earth," is the title of their rock musical for this year. It is their story, they tell me. It describes the search of many individuals for a world where all can live in unity, and their discovery of God as Love. And they build their "house" on rock, so that it will not crumble. They build it on the firm foundation of the Gospel. "Only you remain, Lord. You fill my emptiness and pain . . . You alone are Life, in your house I'll live all the days of my life." Thus they sing during the first half of the program.

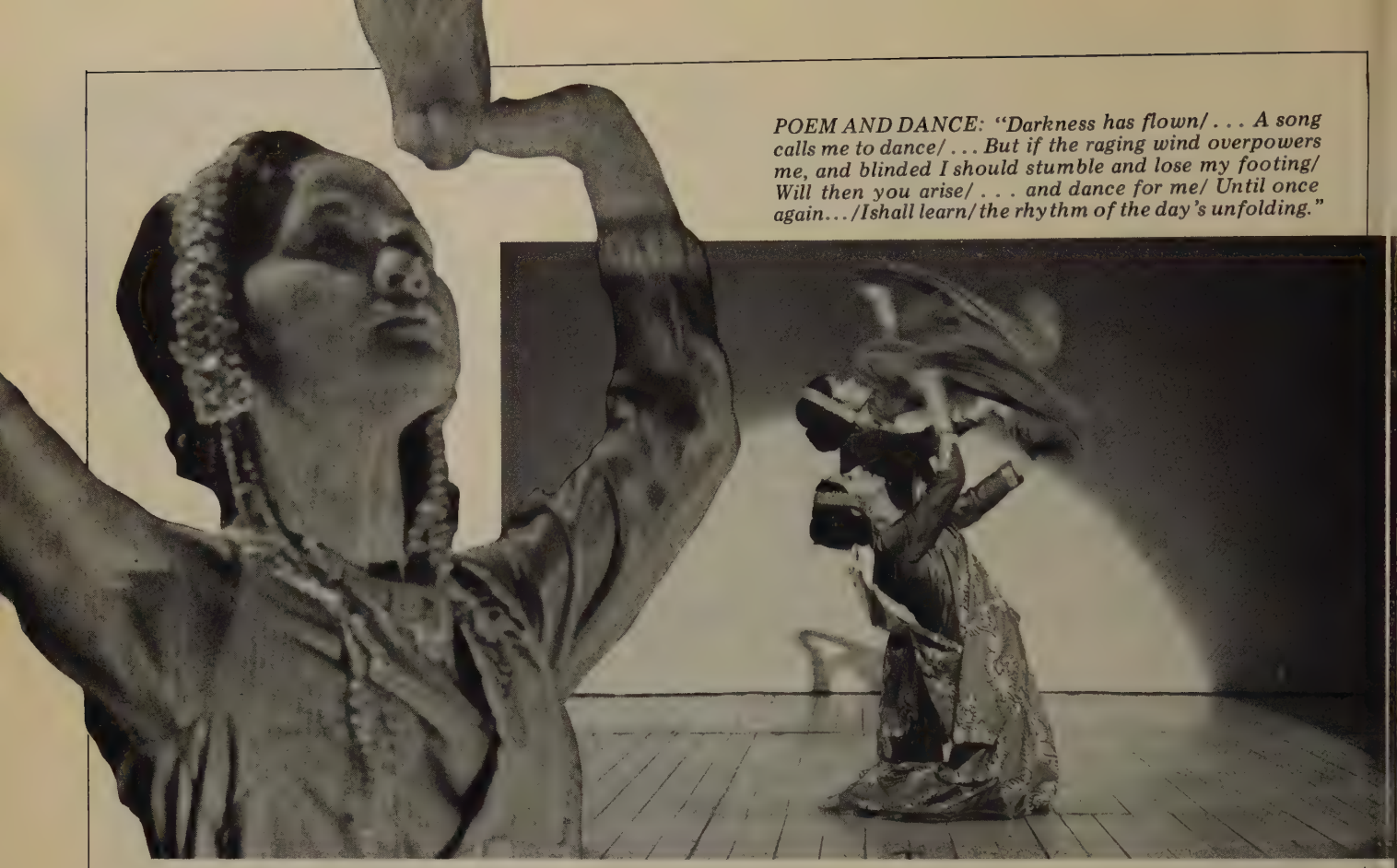
The second act portrays their common effort to put the words of the Scriptures into practice, with the sharing of their experiences of life. And they sing of the discovery of the key to the life of unity they want to live: Jesus on the cross. Yes, the "house" can be built on this foundation. The words of the song which looks into the future and speaks of a new world, carry the power of an inner certainty: "I see a new world arising. I knew Love could not die and in this endless Love the earth is coming to life again."

"It speaks about unity and it was created in unity," they all tell me, when I ask them about the genesis of this latest production. "A huge amount of work went into this project," Therese, one of the soloists tells me. "We decided on folk rock music because it seemed to best express the internationality of the group and the message of unity we want to convey. We worked and worked, because we wanted everything — from words to music, from the choreography to the lights — to be decided together, agreed upon by all. It was a tremendous experience of unity which enriched all of us."

LEFT: Gen Verde greets the audience at the end of a performance. They have recently completed 40 concert tours in several countries of Europe with 550 performances before 700,000 people. They've had TV appearances in Ireland, France, Germany, Italy, Austria, Malta, and for CBS in the United States.

TOP RIGHT: Kara from Manila is one of the choreographers of Gen Verde. "I have always been a revolutionary at heart," she says every time she speaks of her past. "I tried to change things in many ways. I wanted justice for all and I fought for it. When I was beginning to become discouraged I finally understood that Jesus had paid in person for his revolution. I saw as never before what a unique value 'his' revolution had, and I embraced it wholeheartedly, starting again from scratch."

MIDDLE RIGHT: Maysy from the Canary Islands, and BOTTOM RIGHT: Christine from Uganda. If you ask any of the 19 young women what they are trying to do, they will undoubtedly answer: "Now all my efforts are aimed at using my talents in unity with the others in the group in order to create together music and songs which express the ideal we have found. We wish to say to the world, also through this media, that God is love, beauty, harmony and light for every person on earth."



POEM AND DANCE: "Darkness has flown/ . . . A song calls me to dance/ . . . But if the raging wind overpowers me, and blinded I should stumble and lose my footing/ Will then you arise/ . . . and dance for me/ Until once again . . . /I shall learn/ the rhythm of the day's unfolding."

This is what is new about Gen Verde, what makes of them, as someone said, "an international musical force." They share with you their life, a life based on the Gospel message of unity and love, and they communicate to the audience that the Gospel is joy, is creativity, is for today. At the end of their show you have lived their adventure as they invite you to do at the beginning when they say: "We would like to meet, not as spectators and actors, but as all actors in a single experience lived together."

THE BEGINNING

The Gen Verde, the first musical expression of the Focolare Movement, together with Gen Rosso, started in Loppiano, Italy in 1966, when this little city was still in its infancy. Already at that time, however, hundreds of young people had come to live there for a period of time and to try to put the Gospel into practice together. Sunday visitors were many and it seemed logical to enliven their day with some singing. Little shows were prepared for them which carried a certain exotic flavor because of the internationality of the actors. "It was a way to share our personal experiences in songs," Regina, another young woman from Gen Verde tells me. "One day," she continues, "we received a gift — it was a set of drums, trimmed in green. Verde in Italian means green. Our little group had a name, and the news of its existence started to spread in the neighboring towns. We began being invited to sing at weddings, at town fairs and to participate in amateur contests. We started from places around home, but soon began traveling farther and farther away." They were ten at that time, and were enthusiastically welcomed at the European summer Mariapolises in Portugal, Belgium, Spain and Lebanon. "I remember that on our way back from Beirut in 1970 we stopped in Istanbul," Regina comments. "There we performed for an audience made up of people who knew the Focolare.

ABOVE: At the keyboard, Joy from the Philippines. She also performs a number of dances.

"Our first official tour, however took place in Europe, in 1971."

Therese is from Scotland. She studied music at the Royal Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow. "One evening I met an Italian priest there," she explains, "who suggested that I come to hear something about the Focolare Movement. My musical ear immediately interpreted his invitation as one to a folk concert. I agreed to go since I really enjoyed that type of music. But I found no guitars or sing-along that evening. A young woman instead spoke about the beginnings of the Focolare, of her meeting with Chiara Lubich, of their realization in the midst of the war that only one ideal was worth living for — God. For a moment nothing else in the world existed for me other than the thought that this was the way I had been searching for."

In a few years Gen Verde went from preparing a few songs for the Loppiano visitors, to arranging real shows for demanding audiences in some of the biggest cities in Europe. "The system, however," Regina tells me, "never changed." We had learned from the beginning that our talents would blossom if we worked as a team; if we placed the love for one another before our interset in a good show; if we were able to become one before doing anything else.

"Working and living in this way we ended up discovering talents we never thought we had." Regina gives me a convincing example. "We were preparing for our first tour in Switzerland. While meditating on the Gospel one day, I came across the passage that speaks of Jesus calming the storm. To me it seemed to express the situation we found ourselves in at that time as we ventured out on our first tours. So I wrote a song. Everyone liked it and encouraged me on, so next I tried to put music to the episode of Mary Magdalene washing Jesus' feet. Times were favorable for that type of music since many popular singers were getting their ideas for songs from the Gospel. We soon realized that our songs based on the gospel had an impact on people everywhere."

ABOVE: Maria Regina is from Seoul, Korea. The dance she is performing goes back to ancient times and depicts the ascent of a Buddhist monk to arrive at union with Buddha. "What I want to express through this dance," Maria Regina explains, "is the joy of having discovered God's love for me."

TOP: Paola from Italy is one of the soloists of the group. She explains that Gen Verde does not perform only in theaters. "We put on our show," she says, in hospitals, schools, nursing homes, and also in prisons."

IN CONCERT

Today Gen Verde has performed before 700,000 people with an impressive record of tours all over Europe: London, Westminster's Central Hall; Liverpool, Philharmonic; Vienna, Konzerthaus; Milan, Conservatory; Holland, The Hague's Congressbouw; Zurich, Stadthof; Geneva, The Ecumenical Council of Churches; Rome, Flaminio Stadium; Vatican City, Nervi Hall. . . and more. They have cut over twenty records in English, Spanish, Italian, French and German. Gen Verde has been defined as:"Youthful, uplifting, modern, exciting, engaging, entertaining."

But if you ask them what is the key to their success it is something very simple: they sing what they try to live, and the Gospel, today as always, has a tremendous power to attract young and old, single and married, men and women . . . . all. ■

THE PERSON BEHIND THE DISABILITY

by SHARRY SILVI

"Technology that Enables." This was the title of the 4th Annual Conference on Rehabilitation Engineering held this past September in Washington. It was one of the activities sponsored by the Rehabilitation Engineering Society of North America (RESNA) for the International Year of the Disabled. Through talks, workshops, exhibits showing the latest products available on the market, the conference aimed at informing professional people, consumers and legislators about the main issues regarding disabled persons, such as communications systems, mobility, independence, etc.

The word "independence" is heard repeatedly when speaking with those who invent, improve, or produce objects geared to helping people who without them would be severely limited in their mobility. The emphasis has indeed shifted from a paternalistic attitude towards the handicapped to one where assistance or protection, also in the form of legislation, is sought for them in order to make their integration in society possible.

"But we have to work together if we want to accomplish something." This is the opinion of those who work in scientific research, information dissemination, or marketing research. "Or else," they say, "even the most useful, ingenious inventions serve no purpose because they don't reach the person who needs them."

Everybody agrees that a greater unity is also needed among the different organizations for the handicapped, and a greater coordination is hoped for among the programs sponsored by the federal government, through the National Institute of Handicapped Research of recent institution.

These and similar ideas are often repeated in the interviews I have had with a number of people who work with and for the disabled.

Who are they? Where are they? What do they do? We will start from the United Nations.

DR. IRWIN: "WE ARE ALL DISABLED."

I met Dr. Michael Irwin in his office at the U.N. He is a doctor "borrowed" temporarily from UNICEF by the organization for the Year of the Disabled because of his vast competence. He tells me that he has traveled extensively during the summer and has visited many countries in Europe and Africa. In some countries, like Japan, for example, according to one survey, 80% of the people know about the International Year for the Disabled. In other countries where you find many disabled persons, hardly anyone knows about the program.

Yet to develop an awareness among people about just who the disabled are is certainly one of the objectives that the U.N. Year is aiming at. "In a sense we are all disabled," he tells me. "Without glasses I couldn't see, just like one third of the adults in Manhattan. Yet we don't think of ourselves as being disabled because we're so accustomed to wearing glasses.

"Another point," he continues, "is that of integration and equality. I could have a heart attack tomorrow or be involved in an accident and suddenly find myself in a wheelchair. I would certainly expect to be given the same rights that I had when I was able-bodied. It is absurd to think of disabled persons as second-class citizens, but unfortunately this is what happens in many countries, both developing and developed."Dr. Irwin speaks then about prevention; a broad and important area and ends with rehabilitation which, according to him, should take place within the community. "This implies," he says, "doing little for the many who have not been reached before, as opposed to the much that was done for the few who were in institutions. In wealthy countries like Kuwait, for example, where there is completely free medical service and beautiful institutions for the disabled, they have begun to realize that this is not the answer. They have to think of community involvement. And here we can learn from the developing countries," he says. He shows me a picture of a school in Bangladesh where a blind boy is writing with his Braille equipment next to two other boys using pens. "It is partly because they can't afford to build schools for the blind, but the end result is integration which is so desired by everyone."

All in all Dr. Irwin feels that the U.N. initiative has opened many people's eyes to these problems and has been an incentive to look for solutions. "You can't achieve everything in one year of course," he concludes. "This is only the beginning."

MR. YOUDIN: "IT'S BETTER TO HELP OTHERS, THAN TO MAKE BULLETS."

From the United Nations to the New York University Research Hospital it is only a few blocks. Here I find the "brains," those who invent or perfect inventions of others, to help the handicapped conquer their independence. Mr. Youdin, a nuclear engineer who works in the field of biochemical engineering because, "It's better to

do something which helps other people than to make bullets," feels that the United Nations initiative is a very useful one from a political point of view. "Initiatives such as this one," he tells me, "make a problem public, alerting the government that something is needed. Otherwise the money would go for roads or for shooting the 'Columbia' up to the moon."

In his "independent living lab," he shows me a short film about a voice-controlled wheelchair. In a specially equipped environment, a person simply has to pronounce certain words to open a door, turn the pages of a book, turn on the radio or TV, or the lights, or even make a phone call. The wheelchair is not commercially available, but this doesn't discourage him. Among the many inventions only a few reach the manufacturing stage, while others remain the object of research and study — and "that's already a lot," he tells me. An average of 600 professionals per year from all over the country and the world pass through the lab. "They find out what's going on. Then they can go back, set them up and develop them on their own," he tells me. Mr. Youdin is also optimistic about the prices and the possibility of making these inventions available to the consumer. "With time, as the computer technology comes down in price, these items will also reach a competitive price level. In fact, this is already happening."

The Office of the Handicapped for the city of New York is a division of the Office of the Mayor. It was the first of its kind to be opened in the United States. Its head, Dr. Santiago, is blind. "Disabled people are fairly invisible," he tells me, "because they are not integrated into society. The image of a disabled person is that of a sick person in need of medical services, but when it comes to employing the blind, that's a different matter. The image of the blind person is the beggar on the corner. The same can be said for almost any other disability."

EVEREST AND JENNINGS: " WE SELL MOBILITY AND INDEPENDENCE."

Everest and Jennings, one of the largest companies producing wheelchairs has its head office in Los Angeles. "We have, I'd say thirty people a month who come to us with inventions," he tells me. "Often they can only be used by the people who invented them, and unfortunately in a business situation we have to look at the economics of it too. But at times they come up with some very good things."

The gentleman who joins us at this point has worked at Everest and Jennings for years. "We're selling mobility and independence," he tells me. "A wheelchair isn't just a chair with wheels. It's an extension of an individual." I ask him about the many inventions which never reach the market because of the price, but he also is optimistic, and is so because of the space programs. "Billions and billions of dollars are spent regularly to explore space," he explains to me. "Once the technology was developed, it was found that it had a lot of different applications. There are many inventions which we are using today as a result of the space programs. . . ." It is logical. Something that is invented for an astronaut alone in a spacecraft can also be useful to someone who is isolated because of his handicap here on earth.

To confirm his words he shows me with great patience a number of books illustrating the very latest items on the market — there are phones for the deaf, machines that speak for those who have no voice, tiny computers which, in case of an emergency, by pressing a button, contact five different people, and many other devices. "I think that during the 80's there will be a 'boom' in technology," he says, adding kiddingly, "Certainly, we'll never make things like they do in Europe. There, everything is manufactured to last 200 years, but nobody lives that long."

Taking advantage of the typical Californian hospitality, I ask to speak with the president of the company in order to find out how the whole enterprise began. In this country beginnings are always interesting. Mr. Jennings, the president, is the son of the man who invented the first lightweight, folding wheelchair. "It all began," he tells me, "in 1933 in a West Los Angeles garage. At that time my dad, Harry Jennings, heard from a good friend of his, Mr. Everest, who had broken his back in a mining accident, how difficult it was for him to get around in his heavy wooden wheelchair. He set to work and devised a chair that was both lightweight and collapsible. It was the beginning. Others asked to have something similar." Today the production is reaching its two millionth item.

In this "family-started" company a sort of family atmosphere has remained. "Several handicapped people work here," Mr. Jennings, Jr. tells me, and expresses his interest in Rehabilitation Engineering and in the different areas of physical therapy: "To tell the

truth," he continues, "I would love for everybody to get well and have us go out of business." This is a pretty strong statement for a businessman, but I believe him. And I believe all the others as well, who tell me that the friendly atmosphere which I found in the offices I visited depends a lot on the fact that the people working there know they're doing something useful for humanity.

Mr. Youdin, who has been working in this field for more than fourteen years, tells that when he began, Medical Bio-engineering did not exist as a discipline in itself. Now it is taught as a faculty at the university level.

DR. ROSSIER: " DON'T BECOME DESPERATE, LIFE IS TOO BEAUTIFUL."

And now to Boston, and a visit with Dr. Alain Rossier, Chief of the Spinal Cord Injury Service at the Medical School of Harvard University. "How did I come to this specialty?" he says. "Out of personal interest. I would have liked to become a great neurosurgeon, but there was no way to do this from a wheelchair. While I was working on my own rehabilitation, I started to discover the interest in this specialty." The problems that paraplegics have to face are many. "First of all," Dr. Rossier tells me, "they have to master their personal, physical, psychological, emotional and familial problems, accepting their disability. What helps them the most in doing this, is the hope of becoming independent, to go back to their professional life, attain a certain financial security. This, at times, makes their situation acceptable, but not always. Some will never accept their disability. And this is only the first step. Next they have to become reinserted or resettled in the stream of daily life, to face their own environment, the society, the outside world. This is a challenge anywhere, but the difficulties differ from place to place." According to Dr. Rossier the American public is probably more open and more receptive to a disabled person than the European public. They are better informed, thanks to the large organizations for the disabled that exist in this country. But the fact remains that many people everywhere still believe; most of the time wrongly, that someone in a wheelchair cannot perform or deliver as much as someone who can walk. "It is because of a lack of information," he explains to me. "The problem disappears every time the truth is shown."

I ask him what he thinks of sports for the handicapped. He answers that he finds them very useful. "They help the individual to get back into the stream of the usual life; they're good for the health, as well as giving the pleasure of competing with others." He mentions in particular the para-Olympics for people in wheelchairs which are held every four years.

"Is there any hope for a complete cure for paraplegia?" I question. "No," he says, "no complete cure, medical or surgical, exists at the moment. There are different methods which have been developed for diagnosing the patient's condition and for avoiding further deterioration. This is all at the moment."

From my brief conversation with Dr. Rossier I can easily have an intuition of the profound relationship that he must have with his patients, a relationship rooted in a personal experience. So I have the courage to ask, "If you had all the paraplegics of the world in front of you. . . ." "I would be afraid," he says, interrupting me. "But what would you tell them?" I continue. Dr. Rossier thinks for a moment and then adds, "I would tell them, 'don't become desperate. Life is too beautiful.' "

MR. MOSES: "THE PERSON BEHIND THE DISABILITY."

Rehabilitation International is an international organization that distributes information on everything that is being done for the handicapped. Dr. Rossier mentioned it to me, so I decide to interview the Director of the American Branch whose office is located in the heart of New York City. Mr. Moses, from behind his desk covered with papers, explains briefly to me the goals and work of the organization. He goes into great detail when he speaks with real enthusiasm about the Film Library for which he is responsible. "The best films," he tells me, "are the ones that focus on the real person behind the disability. This is a reflection of the situation that is basic to everyone — everyone is frail, everyone is vulnerable." Mr. Moses seems to put everything of himself into what he does. "It is not possible to work here," he tells me, "without facing sooner or later the problem of suffering, of Christian ethics. Handicapped people suffer more than you or I," he continues. "Are they closer to God for this?" I can tell that he is asking himself the question, so I let him go ahead. "This aspect fascinates me, even though I know we are all different. Some people can get a broken arm and as a result a vast world opens up for them, while others can lose

all four limbs and remain totally unaltered in any respect.

"Here in the States we have the reputation for being pragmatic. We want to get on with the job and waste no time. In Europe they're not afraid to face the philosophical aspect of the problem, but then very little is accomplished. How can these things be put together?"

He proceeds to tell me what set off this chain of thoughts. "I saw a program prepared by members of six Churches in Minnesota," he tells me, "who are involved in working with the disabled. The program dealt mainly with mentally retarded children. It was not unusual in itself. But at a certain point, almost off-the-record, a nun commented: 'It's remarkable how close some of these people are to sanctity.' It really struck me. It was an entirely new way of looking at the whole thing. It meant that the capacity for love coming from suffering can be enormous." He remains thoughtful for a moment and then continues. "But to whom can you speak about these things?

"And yet in this country where there is such an evasion of suffering, one can see here and there people who are understanding that to run away from suffering forever is impossible. There is much more attention now being given to death and dying, and a growing awareness that segregating the old is costing everybody something . . . and I don't mean just financially."

Time has flown speaking of things that touch the essence of life, whether one is handicapped or not. Mr. Moses concludes, "I don't practice any type of religion, but a couple of nights ago I saw a documentary on TV on Mother Teresa of Calcutta. What struck me was her presence, her driving force. That kind of personality is what is required, that kind of simplicity. One of the things I noticed about her was that she, of all those people there, was the only one who was really original. She was constantly responding to what was needed right then, as opposed to operating out of a program or out of a general set of ideas."

On my way out I tell Mr. Moses that I will remain in touch. I am thinking of the many people I would like to introduce to him, people who have experienced in their lives the immense value of suffering transformed into love.

JOSEPHINE AND JANIE: "A LESSON CONCERNING THE DIGNITY OF EVERY PERSON."

I find this is true of Josephine. I know her from the meetings of the New Families that she attends with her daughter Janie who at the age of thirty-four has the brain of a baby, even though she has grown physically. "When the doctor gave us the whole picture, we decided to move to a bigger house in order to take care of our daughter," Josephine tells me in her home in Queens. Janie is lying on a small folding bed next to us and happily smiles even though she doesn't understand our conversation. "She can tell when someone loves her," Josephine continues. "She likes children, especially when they come and make a fuss over her." Josephine is willing to go back into the past. "In the beginning I cried all day long, and my husband was really worried. So one evening I told him: "Now I understand. This is God's will for us. Do you know why he sent Janie to us? Because we will take good care of her.' " Many years have passed, but Josephine can't remember any dramatic moments in her life. And this is what is most striking about our conversation. The simple way in which she tells you of her difficult situation transmits the idea that her life, like the life of each one of us, follows a plan of God, and according to her, there is nothing extraordinary in attempting to live it day by day as well as she can. Also her faith touches me: "Whenever I need help, I pray to God." Josephine is convinced that God has helped her to grow spiritually. "I think I've become a better person through Janie. I have more patience and I'm more tolerant with other people."

Josephine takes Janie everywhere with her and has the impression that people are happy to see her. "I don't give it too much thought, however." she tells me. "I just try to do everything I do out of love. There would be so many other things that I could tell you, but I don't know how to explain them. They are too deep to be put into words."

She shows me a letter written to her recently by a nephew. "There's something else we owe you thanks for. Something you gave us when we were kids, something whose value and importance we were able to appreciate only after years had elapsed. I'm referring to the lesson in morality, a lesson concerning the dignity of every person, which you and Uncle Ed gave us. You gave it to us in the living example of your devotion to Janie. It's a lesson you've never stopped giving us. When I was a boy, I was made uneasy by your treatment of Janie. Talking to her as you did seemed to me somehow a sort of show, a pretence that she was perfectly normal. It took me years of living and studying and reflection to realize the full power and splendor of what you do. You're not pretending anything. You are recognizing that Janie is a person possessed of the same inviolable rights as any other person, as worthy of love and respect, as sacred in the eyes of God. . . ."

One of the so-called "Ten Commandments" printed on a leaflet that was distributed to everyone who works with the handicapped in the Archdiocese of San Antonio, Texas, comes to mind: "I name you my children; let no one else define my sons and daughters. Call no one 'crippled' or 'disabled.' They are persons: persons *with* disabilities, individuals *with* handicaps." It echoes the document published by the Holy See last March for the International Year of the Disabled which deserves an article by itself. We read there: "A disabled person is one of us, a sharer in the same humanity. By recognizing and promoting that person's dignity and rights, we are recognizing and promoting our own dignity and our own rights."[1]

1) English translation from L'Osservatore Romano; English Edition, March 23, 1981.

WORD OF LIFE

"I am the servant
of the Lord.
Let it be done to me
as you say."
(Lk. 1:38)

The word makes us live.

The word makes us free.

The word guarantees happiness.

The word converts.

The word purifies us.

The word draws us to our specific vocations.

The word brings forth the hatred of the world and the sanctity of the disciple.

The word makes us see the truth.

The word brings comfort.

The word gives us joy.

The word produces works.

The word gives wisdom.

The word preserves us from human concerns.

The word obtains everything.

The word brings about union with God.

The word gives us hope of eternal life.

The word makes us one.

The word changes one's mentality.

The word makes each soul a heaven.

"I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be done to me as you say" (Lk. 1:38).

These well-known words of Mary, transmitted to us by Scripture, are part of the Gospel account of a most extraordinary event. However, they are words that we too are called to put into practice. Let us look at them more closely.

Mary is still a young girl at home in Nazareth when an angel appears to her and announces that she is to become the mother of the Messiah. Since she has already decided to consecrate her virginity to God, she recognizes the insurmountable difficulty inherent in the fulfillment of the angel's words. So she asks for a sign. Thereupon, the angel reveals to her that her cousin Elizabeth, who was considered sterile, is also expecting a baby. "Because," the heavenly messenger concludes, "nothing is impossible with God."

At this point Mary declares, **"I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be done to me as you say."**

God has chosen Mary to be the mother of the Messiah, thus giving her a leading role in his plan of salvation. In response, Mary expresses her unconditional trust in God and places herself entirely in his hands. But with utmost simplicity and with the freedom of one who loves, she also asks for light in order to understand. For she is not a slave who submits blindly, but a daughter; and so she acts as a daughter toward God, her Father. But no sooner does she receive the light to understand, that she commits herself wholeheartedly.

"I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be done to me as you say."

Mary is certain of God's omnipotence. And now that she is aware of her destiny and has had this confirmed by the sign given her by the angel, she declares her faith and her obedience.

The commands of God which concern salvation always demand obedience. Salvation history begins with Abraham's act of obedience. And in the fullness of time, Mary shows her willing acceptance of God's plans by her act of faith and obedience. Because of an act of obedience Christ comes into the world, just as through an act of obedience he will leave it.

"I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be done to me as you say."

"I am the servant of the Lord."

All God needs in order to carry out his plans are people who put themselves in his hands with all the humility and availability of a servant. As her attitude shows, Mary is at the complete disposal of God's creative activity. She truly represents humanity, whose destiny she takes upon herself.

The term "servant of the Lord" is not only an expression of humility, it is also a title of honor applied to the great servants in salvation history, such as Abraham, Moses, David, and the prophets. Therefore, with these words Mary is also affirming her own greatness.

"I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be done to me as you say."

Mary's words tell us how we must live out our role as Christians. These words have always been considered the highest possible expression of a person's atti-

tude toward God because they express both a passive availability and a readiness to act, an unfathomable emptiness of self and a complete fullness.

"I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be done to me as you say."

Mary's destiny is sublime and awe-inspiring. But she is not the only one called by God to give life to Christ. Each of us Christians has a similar task, even though we are to carry it out in a different way. We too must let Christ become incarnate in us, until we can repeat with St. Paul, "The life I live now is not my own, Christ is living in me" (Gal. 2:20).

How can we do this? By welcoming the Word of God into our lives with the same disposition that Mary had: the Word that we hear announced to us at church on Sunday, or that we come to know through reading the Gospel or even through reading this monthly commentary.

Let us be completely open to receive it, since we know that it is not simply the word of another human being, but the Word of God and thus it contains the presence of Christ. Let us receive Christ in us through his Word, eager to put it immediately into practice, moment by moment.

If we do this, the world will once again see Christ as he passes through the streets of our modern cities — Christ in us, dressed like everyone else, working in offices, schools, and every other sort of environment, in the midst of everyone else.

And what is more, the world will witness that Christ living in us will set in motion a powerful force for change, rooted in the Gospel, that transforms people and society creating a world that is better, more human, more united.

Take courage! There is a magnificent, divine adventure awaiting us. Let us not miss this opportunity.

CHIARA LUBICH

EXPERIENCE

THE STRENGTH TO SAY YES

I was at work when I got a phone call from home. It was my brother; he was in tears telling me that our older sister had tried to commit suicide. I froze, not wanting to believe it, and a thousand thoughts welled up inside of me — why hadn't I realized . . . why hadn't I seen this coming. But now it wasn't the time to worry about the past. I had to think clearly.

I asked Dan where Mom was, but he wasn't sure. He had the idea that she had gone with Martha in the ambulance. But at least he had scribbled down the name of the hospital.

I ran to catch a bus and on the way there, I asked Jesus that Martha would not die — not like this.

When I got there they told me that she was not in critical condition, but it would take a number of hours for her to sleep off the effects. The doctors advised us to return later, but there was no way they could convince us. We wanted Martha to feel all our love for her the minute she woke up. After only a few hours she came to, and it seemed she was happy to see us there.

We stayed with her until visiting hours were over, and on the way out it came to me that it was my birthday — that I had asked Jesus for a present. I understood that he had given me himself, Jesus Crucified and Forsaken. I thanked him, and I asked him for the strength to keep saying yes to this suffering.

The days that followed were filled with anxiety and decisions to be made. Dad was away on a business trip in Europe and our messages kept missing him. Mom was so stricken seeing Martha in this condition that she wasn't able to pull herself together to make the decisions asked of us by the doctors. They told us that Martha was showing signs of a deep depression but that it was best to continue the treatment at home. The hospital social worker disagreed; he wanted to keep her in the hospital for fear that she attempt suicide again.

At this point I felt that the weight of the whole situation would crush me, but one thought came to me: "God is Love, and love conquers all." I knew what to do: I could love.

One evening, leaving the hospital, this came to my mind, when very late I decided to call a cab. As I got in all my worries for Martha came up over me as if to swamp me. The cab driver was singing and wanted me to sing too. I remembered then the Word of Life for that month: "The members are many but the body is one" (1Cor.12:20). I thought, ". . . the body is one." To love this member meant to try to remember the words of the song with him. So, in order to love him, that is what I did. In that moment on the way home, I experienced a new peace and hope.

The next day it was decided that Martha would return home. When I told Mom this, she became frightened. Then we remembered that it was the beginning of a new Word of Life, "Blest are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God" (Mt. 5:9). As we read the commentary together, we understood that here we would find the guideline to go ahead day by day, to bring peace into our family which had suffered so much.

S. L.

The very young and the Gospel

At school my gym teacher told the whole class that we could have a free period and could go anywhere as long as we remained on the schoolgrounds. So I went outside with my friends. One of them asked us to go with her to the store to buy some cigarettes. Everyone agreed. But I knew that it was not the will of God for us to leave the schoolgrounds nor for me to smoke. So when she asked me if I wanted to go, I said no. She began to tell everyone what a "nerd" I was. She was trying to persuade me by saying, "Everyone is doing it why don't you?" I was really tempted to go with them so I wouldn't be laughed at and would be considered "part of the crowd", but I remembered that a Gen must go against the current even if everyone else is doing the opposite. So I told her no again. Everyone then began to leave. A girl friend stayed and told me that she agreed with me, that was the hundredfold.

Editha

One day at recess while we were about to play jump rope, one of my friends asked if she could play. The person who owned the rope said no to her and then they started an argument. One of them also got mad at me. Back in school when I was answering one of the questions outloud, she looked at me and made fun of me calling me Chinese girl, I couldn't stand it anymore so I wanted to make fun of her too, but I remembered the Word of Life, "What I want is mercy not sacrifice" so I just didn't pay any attention to her. After recess we were trying to finish our social study work. She sat right beside me and she asked me if we could share the book. I thought to myself, "This is my chance to get back at her," but then I knew that it's not the will of God and I had to love her to the end. So I shared my book with her. I really got the hundredfold because she doesn't make fun of me anymore, and I knew I had loved her.

Maryrose

One day in school, a girl who always made fun of people, started to make fun of me. She started to tell false things about me to people. I was really mad and I wanted to yell at her. But instead I tried to say "yes" to this suffering. Later on that day, she came up to me and asked me if I would help her with her Math. I immediately said no because I remembered how she had treated me earlier. After she left I realized that I had not loved but had done what I wanted to do. I also thought about loving your enemies and those who hurt you. So I walked up to her and told her that I would be glad to help her. She was really happy.

Marijo

One day I was working at school I was having trouble finding some answers to some problems in my workbook. A girl I know, saw that I was having trouble so she offered to give me the answers to the ones I was having trouble on. I was about to accept her offer, but then I realized that it would be like cheating. So I told her nicely that I would find them myself. She said OK. I was very happy that I hadn't cheated because I knew that Jesus wouldn't.

Christie

One day I was working on my homework at school when a boy I don't really like asked me for help with math. I was about to say no but then I remembered — what would Jesus do. So I said yes! He was happy and so was I, but it was the hundredfold after school, he came up to me and thanked me. I went home with Jesus in my heart.

Stephanie

GEN ORANGE

YOU FOUND ME

SONGS OF THE MARIAPOLIS

The Gen Orange is one of the singing groups of the Gen Movement, the youth of the worldwide Focolare Movement founded by Chiara Lubich in Trent, Italy in 1943. The aim of the Focolare Movement is to work for unity in order to give its contribution toward the fulfillment of Jesus' prayer to his Father, "May they all be one."

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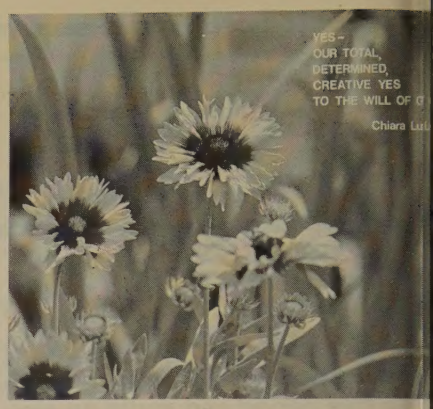
Focolare posters

A new color poster (15" x 18") is now available at all the Focolare Centers. The other four posters (also 15" x 18")can still be obtained as well. All can be ordered by mail from:
Focolare Movement, P.O. Box 496, New York, N.Y. 10021



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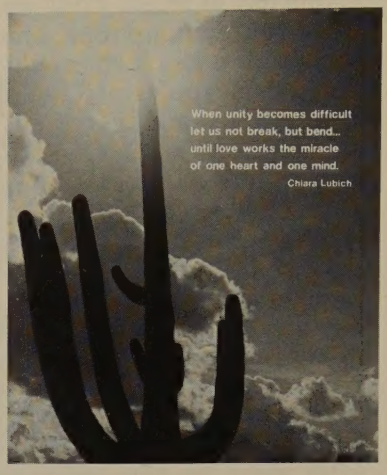
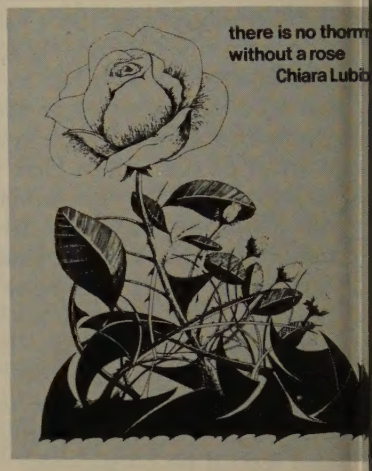
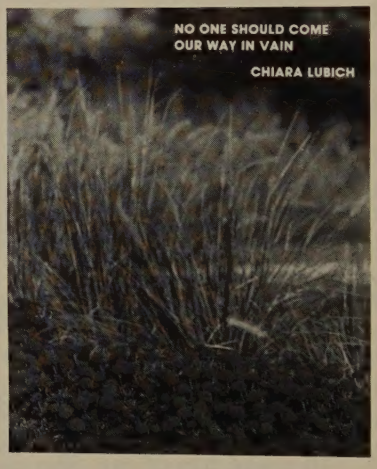

When unity becomes difficult
let us not break, but bend...
until love works the miracle
of one heart and one mind.
Chiara Lubich

FMPc12



FMI



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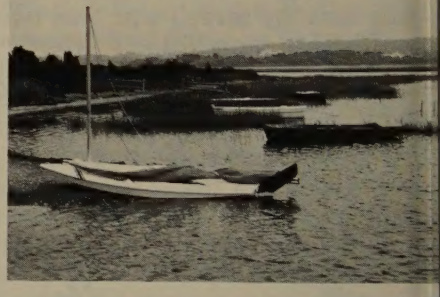

FMI

Price: $2.00/color — $1.50/black and white

If ordered by mail please add handling and shipping charges and specify if you wi receive them first or third class.

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1 poster 1.40, 2 posters 1.55, 3 posters 1.70, 4 posters 1.80. For more than 4 pos postal rates depend on weight and zone.

THIRD CLASS: **Delivery time: approximately 2 we**

1 to 2 posters 1.00, 3 to 4 posters 1.15, 5 to 6 posters 1.30, 7 posters 1.40. For m than 7 posters, postal rates depend on weight and zone.

What is the Focolare Movement?

THE BEGINNINGS

The Focolare Movement began in 1943, in Italy. Chiara Lubich, with a small group of girls, realized in the midst of the total destruction of World War II, that God is the only one worth living for. Hence they began to place the Gospel in the center of their lives. The testament of Jesus became their Ideal: "That all may be one . . . that the world may know that you have sent me, and that you have loved them as you have loved me . . . " (Jn.17: 23). The life lived by these first girls, the spiritual way they spontaneously followed, gave rise to a form of spirituality proper to the Focolare Movement. It represents a powerful means of introducing the Gospel into modern life.

WHO ARE THE FOCOLARINI

The name "Focolarini" takes its origin from the Italian word "fire" and suggests the idea of "carriers of fire."

Single men and women live in separate communities called Focolare Centers. Their principal aim is to achieve unity among themselves through mutual charity practiced twenty-four hours a day. They follow the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience. They work as other lay men and women in regular jobs and professions.

Some married persons, even though continuing to live in their families, participate fully in the life of either the men's or women's Focolare Centers in their common effort to achieve this same unity. They are called "Married Focolarini."

THE VOLUNTEERS

The Volunteers, who are also called the "Volunteers of God," would like to transform all human realities according to the Gospel spirit. For this reason they remain in their jobs and in their professions in order to vivify them with this spirit.

Their aim is to help form a society made of men and women who are made "new" by the Gospel message and who can then bring new life to all fields of human activity (education, business, etc.). This results in new social relationships which, in turn, lead to the realization of new structures of society.

THE LARGEST MEMBERSHIP

The largest membership of the Movement is made up of men, women, and young people of all social conditions who are free of any formal ties with it. Their bond of unity stems from their free and willing acceptance of its spirit. They keep in touch with the Movement and with one another through large or small gatherings, publications, correspondence, and personal contact.

People with other commitments, even those bound to religious institutions, can form part of the Movement too because the Movement exists wherever its spirit is lived. People of non-Christian religions are also counted among the Movement's friends. Also those who owe no allegiance to any faith are often attracted by one or another of the Movement's aspects.

GEN

The new generations of the Focolare Movement form another Movement or, better, three movements: the Gen 2, the Gen 3 and the Gen 4 Movements, divided according to their various age groups. "Gen" stands for new generation.

Thousands of young people all over the world have been attracted by the spirituality of unity. Their number continues to grow.

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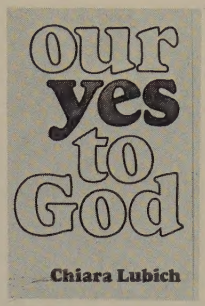

Paper $2.95

THE TALKS OF THE 1981 MARIAPOLIS

"A celebration without end" is how Vincent de Paul describes the lives of those who say "yes" to God by doing his will.

In this book Chiara Lubich explores the many facets of doing God's will, which is one of the central points in the life of the Focolare Movement she founded. Her central thesis is: God is love, and there can be no better way of loving him in return than by doing what he asks of us.

First she puts this fundamental intuition to the test of Scripture. She then moves on to the experiences of some of the great saints, and draws upon the teachings of the Church Fathers, the Second Vatican Council, and the recent popes.

This book is stimulating and practical. It shows that doing God's will involves much more than mere passivity or resignation. Moreover, throughout the book, Chiara Lubich points out that doing God's will is the way to true freedom and to our total fulfillment as human beings.

LAZARUS COME OUT

by Matthew Silvan

Is it possible to begin a new life at fifty, to break out of the familiar routine and embark upon a new and risky course? Can convictions built up over a lifetime be suddenly overturned?

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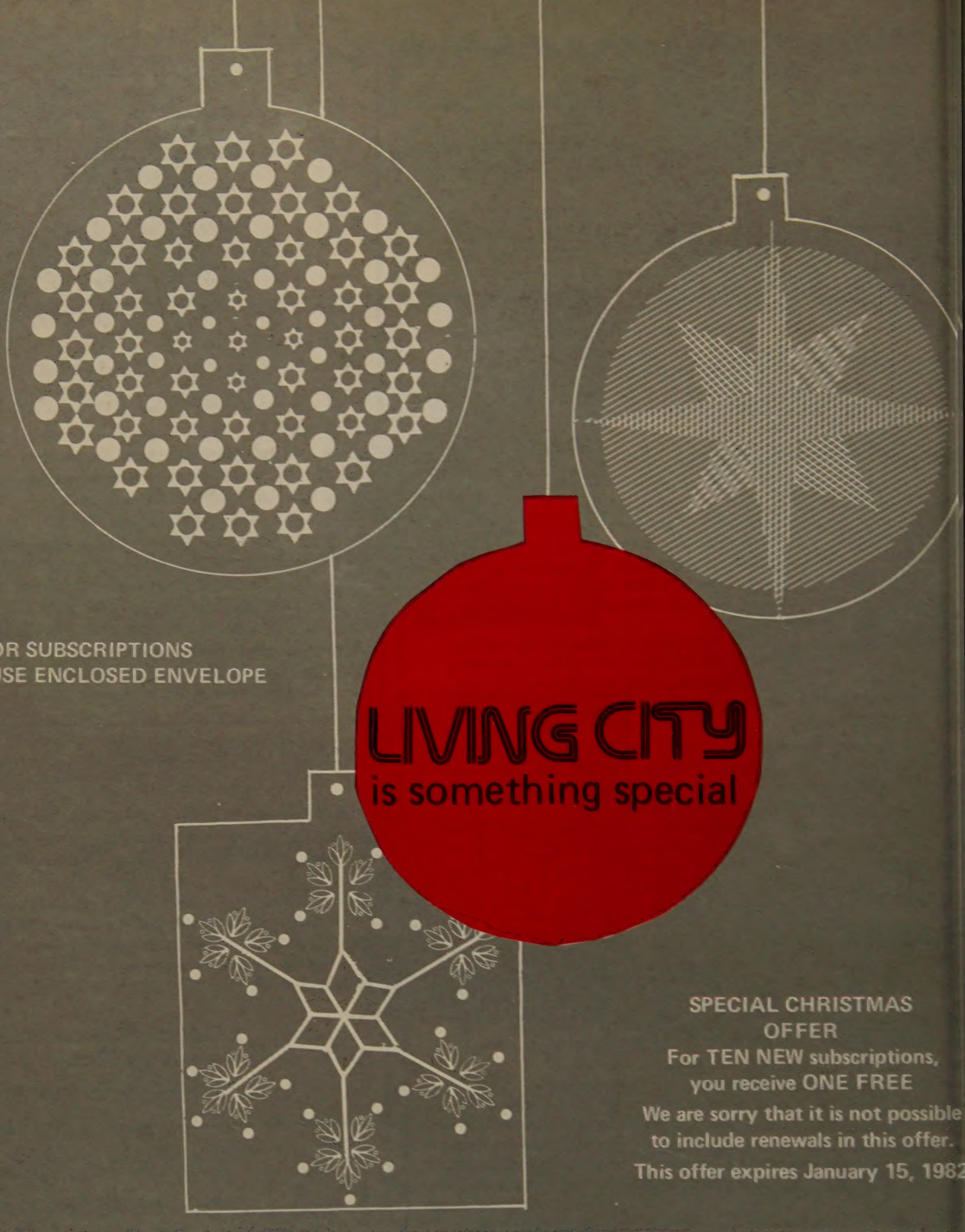

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